

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIE-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00 /075 W

-----072634 062158Z /66

O 061640Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7979

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, RH

SUBJECT: RHODESIAN FRONT DISSIDENTS FORM NEW OPPOSITION PARTY

REF: (A) PRETORIA 3091, (B) PRETORIA 3270,

1. SUMMARY: TWELVE RIGHT-WING RHODESIAN FRONT DISSIDENTS
EXPELLED FROM THE PARTY IN APRIL HAVE FORMED RHODESIAN
ACTION PARTY TO ACT AS FORMAL OPPOSITION TO IAN SMITH.
THE NEW PARTY HAS A STRONGLY CONSERVATIVE BASE AND ADVOCATES
EXPANSION OF THE ANTI-TERRORIST STRUGGLE, REJECTION OF MAJORITY
RULE, AND A "TURNHALLE-TYPE" POLITICAL SOLUTION. END SUMMARY.

2. THE TWELVE RIGHT-WING DISSIDENT RHODESIAN FRONT (RF)
MPS EXPELLED IN APRIL (PRETORIA 2133) HAVE JOINED WITH OTHER
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CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS TO FORM A NEW OPPOSITION, THE RHODESIAN
ACTION PARTY (RAP). PLAYING UPON GROWING DISCONTENT IN RHODESIA
OVER SMITH'S CONDUCT OF THE WAR AND NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD
MAJORITY RULE, THE NEW PARTY'S LEADERS HAVE ADVOCATED
ALL-OUT WAR AGAINST THE TERRORISTS, ELIMINATION OF "PRO-
TERRORIST" ORGANIZATIONS IN RHODESIA, AND A "TURNHALLE-
TYPE" POLITICAL SYSTEM. REJECTING MAJORITY RULE,

BRITISH AND U.S. INVOLVEMENT, AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH MILITANT BLACK NATIONALISTS, THE RAP CLAIMS MASSIVE AND GROWING WHITE AND BLACK SUPPORT.

3. THE BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THE NEW PARTY IS SAID TO BE THE RHODESIAN ACTION MOVEMENT (RAM), A PARA-MILITARY GROUP WITH REPUTED 3000 MEMBERS FORMED IN MID-1976 TO REPRESENT WHITES IN THE 18-39 MILITARY AGE GROUP. THE RAM'S ADVOCACY OF RUTHLESS EXTENSION OF THE WAR EFFORT IS ECHOED BY THE RAP PLATFORM. RAP ALSO CLAIMS TO HAVE BEGUN NEGOTIATIONS TO GAIN SUPPORT FROM CHIEF CHIRAU'S ZUPO PARTY AND OTHER NON-MILITANT BLACKS. ALTHOUGH RAP WILL NOT PERMIT BLACK MEMBERS, IT HAS REPORTEDLY ALREADY BEGUN ORGANIZING A PARALLEL BLACK ORGANIZATION WITH THE SAME AIMS TO PAVE THE WAY FOR FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS.

4. RAP'S ADVOCACY OF A "TURNHALLE-TYPE" SOLUTION FOLLOWS THE RECENT VISIT OF FIVE PARTY REPRESENTATIVES TO NAMIBIA TO DECIDE IF THE SOLUTION DEVISED BY THE TURNHALLE CONFERENCE WAS APPLICABLE TO RHODESIA. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE PROPOSED RHODESIAN VERSION OF TURNHALLE WOULD CONTAIN A THREE-TIER GOVERNMENTAL SYSTEM, WITH COMPLETE LOCAL AUTONOMY IN RACIALLY-DIVIDED COMMUNITIES AND A MULTI-RACIAL COUNCIL OF STATE AT THE TOP DETERMINING FOREIGN POLICY AND OTHER NATIONAL ISSUES. A MIDDLE TIER OF MULTI-RACIAL REGIONAL AUTHORITIES WOULD HAVE CONTROL OVER AREA-WIDE MATTERS SUCH AS LAND TENURE, HEALTH, AND EDUCATION. THE KEY TO THE SYSTEM WOULD BE "COMMUNITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IDENTITY PROTECTION" (EQUIVALENT TO SOUTH AFRICAN "GROUP IDENTITIES") THROUGH WHICH EACH RACE WOULD BE PERMITTED TO GOVERN ITS OWN AFFAIRS AND MAINTAIN ITS VALUES WHILE PERMITTING THOSE WHO WISH TO MIX TO DO SO.

5. RAP'S PRIMARY GOALS AT THIS STAGE ARE TO SOLIDIFY WHITE SUPPORT, FORM A VIABLE PARTY STRUCTURE, AND CONVINCE THE ELECTORATE THAT IF THE CURRENT BRITISH-U.S. INITIATIVE FAILS (WHICH PRESS SAYS RAP FULLY EXPECTS), IT REPRESENTS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE GOVERNMENT. TO THIS END, INTERIM CHAIRMAN AND RHODESIAN FRONT FOUNDER-MEMBER IAN SANDEMAN (46) HAS ANNOUNCED FORMATION OF FOUR REGIONAL OFFICES. AS A FIRST TEST OF STRENGTH THE PARTY PLANS TO CONTEST THE UP-COMING BY-ELECTION FOR THE RUSAPE PARLIAMENTARY SEAT RECENTLY VACATED BY MP WICKUS DE KOCK (REF B).

6. COMMENT: AT THIS POINT, WE ARE UNABLE TO PREDICT THE RAP'S PROSPECTS FOR WINNING FURTHER SUPPORT WITHIN THE RF OR THE WHITE POPULATION. IN A JULY 6 PRESS CONFERENCE, SMITH SAID HE HAD A STRONG MAJORITY AND SAW NO NEED FOR A GENERAL ELECTION. MORE DEFECTIONS FROM THE FRONT OR A BY-ELECTION VICTORY, HOWEVER, WOULD STRENGTHEN CALLS FOR SUCH

A MOVE. GIVEN THE RAP'S STRESS ON VIGOROUS PURSUING THE WAR
EFFORT AND ITS TIES TO THE RHODESIAN ACTION MOVEMENT ITS RELATION-
SHIP WITH THE ARMY WILL BEAR CLOSE WATCHING.
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